

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Final Summary Notes
Douglas City Hall, Douglas, Arizona
January 19, 2000

Introduction

Meeting was called to order by Bill Van Pelt, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 9:10 a.m. Start time delayed due to last-minute location change from Douglas Police Station to City Hall. All in attendance introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. One person speaking at a time, with no side conversations. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the JAGCT meeting.

Available handouts included:

Response letter from USFWS as to reason for not designating critical habitat.

Annual report on the Jaguar Conservation Agreement for Arizona and New Mexico.
1998 AGFD Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program Technical Report 132.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

One addition to the agenda was suggested:

Consultation Updates (B. Palmer, USFWS)

C. Discussion of summary notes from JAGCT meeting on July 15, 1999

No additional comments on the July 15, 1999 summary notes were provided. Action items were reviewed: Bill Van Pelt committed to send information from the Science Advisory Group (SAG), subcommittee notes, etc. with future meeting notes.

D. Task Reports:

1. Update on AZ-NM sightings - Greg Schmitt and Jack Childs

New Mexico - No new sightings have been investigated since the last meeting. Discussion regarding the Burro Mountains sighting followed. The Burro Mountain sighting was reported to Nick Smith 24 hours after taking plaster casts of the cat-like animal and to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) agent in Las Cruces three days after the incident occurred. Dr Miller (the person that reported the incident) was unavailable for about one month afterwards. The cast of the track was sent to Bill Van Pelt

(AGFD) in August. Bill had the cast evaluated by members of the Depredation Subcommittee and jaguar researchers research in Mexico. Due to the cast only being a partial pad, the results were inconclusive. Michael Robinson provided additional information regarding a 1910 report of a black cougar, also known as a Mexican jaguar, in the same region (Black Range Tales by James A. McKenna) and a previously unreported verbal sighting from the Gila Wilderness (Duffy).

Arizona - Three sightings were investigated since the last meeting: 1) Reported by a herpetologist. He reported large cat tracks in a wash. The investigation found these to be bear tracks. However, mountain lion tracks (not seen by observer) were also found next to the bear tracks during the investigation. 2) Report from a lady in Patagonia. While interviewing the lady, she reported that she did not see an animal, but she could tell a jaguar was present based on odors coming from a small mine or cave. It was the same smell as jaguars in the Phoenix Zoo. No further investigation was performed. 3) A lady saw a spotted cat cross in front of her vehicle on Pomerene Road, north of Benson. The investigation team (Jack Childs and Tim Snow) went to the site and found two sets of tracks that appeared to be from an adult and sub-adult mountain lion.

Discussion – Bill Van Pelt reviewed the Ranking Classification in the 97-98 Annual report. Some JAGCT members were concerned with the effort of investigation on the NM sighting. As depicted by the Arizona sightings, the ranking is very subjective to the experience of the contact person. Therefore, the JAGCT agreed that a standardized protocol is needed for sightings. In addition, we should expand the distribution list of this protocol to include fire and sheriff departments, county and state parks, hunt regulations, and any other initial contact persons. Bill Van Pelt expressed that a brochure can easily be printed to provide this information to these contacts, possibly as early as June. Currently, Jack Childs is developing a phone list of contact people for sightings and a capture team list, which includes hounds-people, agency personnel, and veterinarians.

2. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Wendy Glenn

Warner Glenn has investigated approximately 40 calf killings. None have been attributed to jaguars.

3. Habitat Identification (Section 5.A.) – Tim Snow

Tim Snow introduced himself to the group as the new Nongame Specialist for the Tucson Region. He also announced that he would be willing to chair the Habitat Subcommittee or that a new chairperson may be selected from current members to aid with continuity (to be decided within the Subcommittee).

Tim briefed the JAGCT on the Habitat Subcommittee meeting, held on October 21, 1999 in Silver City, NM. The meeting was well attended. The group discussed several issues, including information exchange and review of committee-specific goals and objectives. Literature review has been completed. The committee has identified prey and potential

prey items for our suitability criteria. Various GIS generated overlays were presented to the subcommittee, but NM information was not available to date. Tim also distributed the draft meeting notes. Turnover in personnel, holidays, and problems with transcribing the recorded meeting resulted in delays with the draft notes. Tim expressed concern regarding direction of the subcommittee. The subcommittee needs to remain focused on their objective to identify habitat, corridors, etc., not whether or not we agree with guidance criteria.

The Habitat Subcommittee did not meet following the JAGCT meeting. We will attempt to use an e-mail system for subcommittee correspondence.

4. JAGSAG Review Response (Section 6.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

An e-mail inquiry was sent in July or August requesting a meeting of the SAG. Unfortunately, the group could not meet during the holiday season. The group is now attempting to meet in April. No meeting place has been set; however, we would like to hold the meeting in a central location. Please remember that members of the SAG are mostly researchers and have other agendas, which may make it difficult for them to commit additional time to the JAGCT.

5. Legal Protection (Section 7.A. and B.) – Greg Schmitt

Nothing new to report. New Mexico legislation is a first step. No initiatives for amendments have been proposed. As a note, Todd Stevenson is the new lead for the NMDGF Nongame Program.

6. Education (Section 6.B.) – Sue Krentz

Sue continues to pursue additional education training (classes). Sue also announced that JAGCT lesson plans will be finalized and available by the July JAGCT Meeting. The Education Subcommittee is still seeking participation from New Mexico.

7. End of the Year Report (Section 8.A.) – Bill Van Pelt

The last report was the July 98 report. The new report, which is for July 1998 – December 1999, should be finalized by April. Bill also reported that the AGFD web-site is being updated to be more user-friendly and will include meeting notes, subcommittee notes, and other products of the JAGCT such as Jack Child's book, Sighting protocol, etc. Bill also reported a new jaguar web-site, <www.savethejaguar.com>, which displays results of occurrence maps and the March 1999 workshop proceedings.

E. Other Business

1. Mexico Update – Raul Valdez

Raul reported on his study area, which includes a steep, mountainous region of the Aros River. The area is approximately 130 miles south of the Arizona border and is comprised of mostly semi-tropical thornscrub habitat. No farming occurs within the study area, but ranching is present. They have identified a minimum of five, and possibly eight, individual jaguars within their study area. The significance of this area is that it may provide a population base for movements north. Raul and his students are attempting to identify potential corridors for northern movements. In addition, Raul reported that they are working closely with private landowners to establish contacts and information sharing with those parties. He also stated that conservation groups in Mexico are looking at ways to implement JAGCT efforts in Mexico.

A question was brought up during Raul's report, requesting that a **map of Sonora be available for future meetings**, so that JAGCT participants could review and know what areas were being discussed during Mexico Updates. **(TASK to Bill Van Pelt)**

In addition, the JAGCT is still trying to obtain funding to translate and print copies of the Mexico Meeting Proceedings. The Proceedings are available in Spanish, but we would still like to translate these into an English version.

2. Consultation Updates (Bruce Palmer)

Bruce Palmer announced that Sherry Barret would be overseeing USFWS efforts with the JAGCT, effective immediately. Bruce has been re-assigned to the Mexican Wolf Recovery efforts and will no longer be available for participation on the JAGCT.

Guidance Criteria - Bruce clarified that the USFWS is not pursuing critical habitat designation for jaguars. Critical Habitat and Occupied Habitat in the Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion are unrelated. Critical Habitat has a regulatory context in the listing process and the application of Section 7. Where the animal may occur, the animal is protected, even outside Critical Habitat.

As a results of the Wildlife Services BO a lawsuit regarding the use of M44's and livestock protection collars was filed in Washington D.C. The EPA has incorporated protection devices in their consultation criteria. Wildlife Services must put these same restrictions on their permittees. Basically, the EPA adopted the WS opinion that these devices may have an effect on jaguars.

Applicant Status – certain private entities that are effected can apply for applicant status. However, a certain set of criteria needs to be met before the party receives applicant status. **Bruce will provide Bill Van Pelt with information on applicant status criteria Bill will distribute to JAGCT.**

F. Close Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, July 13, 2000 at 10:00 am MST. Meeting place to be

announced; possibly in Animas, NM. **Note: Although at the meeting the agreed upon date was July 13 but in a request in the cover letter asking for review of the notes Terry Johnson requested that the meeting date be moved to a week later. No objections were received and the meeting date is now changed to July 20. Same place and time.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:13 PM.

Attendance Roster

Tim Snow	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Greg Schmitt	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Don Cullum	Rancher/New Mexico Cattle Growers
Gilbert Reeves	People for the USA
Steve Fairaizl	USDA Wildlife Services
Bill Radke	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gary Helbing	U.S. Forest Service
Stephanie Coleman	Arizona State University/El Coronado Ranch
Pat Mathis	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Sue Krentz	Rancher/Education Subcommittee Chair
Judy Keeler	Boothill Heritage Association
Cordy Cowan	Rancher
Jerry Pratt	AWF
Wendy Glenn	Malpai Borderlands Group
Kim Bartlein	DOD Ft. Huachuca Wildlife Office
Bruce Palmer	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Van Pelt	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Ron Olding	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Sarah Rinkevich	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Levi Klump	Private citizen
Matt Magoffin	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Meira Gualt	Rancher
Michael Robinson	Southwest Center for Biological Diversity
Steve Pavlik	Native American Historical Researcher
Bill Merhege	Bureau of Land Management
Hairy Woodward	Private citizen
Raul Valdez	New Mexico State University
Karen Kay Husted	Rancher/Educator
Ted Hagen	New Mexico Cattle Growers
Nina King	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Craig Miller	Defenders of Wildlife